

Input of State Rehabilitation Council

SBVI State Rehabilitation Council

The Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (Board), the state rehabilitation council for the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (Division), is in place to advise the Division in accordance with Title I, Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. The Board advises the Division in the development of state plans, policy related to the expenditure of federal and state funds and the coordination and planning for service delivery to individuals involved in vocational rehabilitation and independent living services.

The Board serves as a representative for all individuals who are blind or visually impaired needing vocational rehabilitation and independent living services within the state. The Board's mission statement reflects these priorities: *"The mission of the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired is to promote independence, employment and full inclusion for all citizens who are blind or visually impaired."* All Board agendas are developed by the Board's Executive Committee with the Division Director. Policies are provided to Board members in draft format to provide the opportunity for input prior to finalization of the policies. No recommendations by the Board of SBVI were rejected by the Division during the plan period.

Review of State Plan Goals and Strategies

The State Plan is the official document that outlines the activities of the past year and future plans for SBVI vocational rehabilitation services. Five attachments were revised and are prepared for submission for FFY 2013. Drafts were presented to the Board at the March meeting and suggested changes have been made.

SBVI's goals and strategies attachments, along with all of the other attachments, were covered in detail at the March, 2012 Board meeting. All attachments were distributed to all board members for further review and comments. The Board approved the 2013 State Plan at the June, 2012 Board meeting.

Public Meetings

Public meetings are held on an annual basis to solicit input into the State Plan as well as to identify priorities for improving services to citizens who are blind or visually impaired. The Board of SBVI recommended sites and formats for the meetings as well as topics to be prioritized for discussion. Board members facilitate each of the meetings. Based on advice from the Board, consumer organizations host the meetings by circulating meeting announcements to constituents and providing refreshments and local transportation for the meetings.

The Division agreed with the Board's recommendations related to public meetings including that meetings be held in Rapid City (in conjunction with the National Federation of the Blind 2012 State Convention), Lower Brule, Sioux Falls (in conjunction with the 2012 South Dakota Association of the Blind State Convention,) and a videoconference with sites in Aberdeen, Pierre, Rapid City, and Sioux Falls. The practice of conducting public meetings in conjunction with other events that bring together people who are blind or visually impaired has worked well; the Division will continue to seek out opportunities for this collaboration in the future. Board members served as facilitators at the meetings.

Governor's Awards for Employment of People with Disabilities

The annual Governor's Awards event is held to recognize individuals, employers and organizations for their contributions to the employment of persons with disabilities. This annual event is a joint effort of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Department of Human Services.

The Division supported the Board's recommendation to assist with the Governor's Awards, and supported attendance by Board members. The Board has a representative who assists in making the award selections along with a committee of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month Activities

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) activities are planned in communities across South Dakota every year by DRS and SBVI staff for the month of October to raise awareness of the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In addition to a financial contribution towards the budget for the events, the Board of SBVI

partners with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation in reviewing proposals for local NDEAM events.

The Division endorses the Board's involvement in planning and supporting NDEAM activities.

VR Program- Consumer Satisfaction

FY 2012 marks the fourth year that SBVI has partnered with the Board of SBVI to conduct a consumer satisfaction survey using the SBVI Client Satisfaction Questionnaire-8 (CSQ-8) survey. The survey was sent to 169 individuals who received services and were closed from the SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Program in FY 2012. Fifty-five surveys were returned for a return rate of 33%. The survey consists of eight core questions and an additional seven questions that were developed with the help of the Board of SBVI. Data analysis is conducted by Dr. Alan Davis at South Dakota State University.

Input from the Board regarding the Consumer Satisfaction Survey centered on increasing the response rate (the FY 2011 response rate was 25%). Strategies were employed (i.e. making follow up phone calls that boosted the response rate), and additional strategies will be explored in order to obtain as much consumer feedback as possible.

Assistive Technology Advisory Committee

The Assistive Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC) advises the board and the Division on assistive technology (AT) and related topics. The ATAC has played an important role in keeping the Board and Division updated on recent developments in the AT realm.

With guidance from the ATAC, the Division has developed multiple resources that provide resources to individuals on low-cost AT solutions and accessible cell phones.

Nominations for Board Vacancies

The Board of SBVI is asked for recommendations for individual's names to be submitted to the Governor's office for consideration of appointment for Board vacancies.

The Division submits names recommended by the Board for consideration by the Governor.

Board Representation at Consumer Organization Conventions

The Board of SBVI has made the commitment to financially support the attendance of consumers and a representative of the Board each year at state conventions of consumer organizations such as National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota and South Dakota Association of the Blind.

The Division supported the Board's recommendation for Board member representation at consumer organization conventions. Board and public meetings are held in conjunction with consumer organization conventions when possible.

Transition Services for Youth who are Blind or Visually Impaired

The Board of SBVI recommended that the Division sponsor activities to address leadership, career planning, and skills of blindness needs of transition age students who are blind or visually impaired. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors work with students to plan their participation as part of Individual Plans for Employment.

Transition week was held July 15-19, 2012 at the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Sioux Falls. The event offers a combination of career exploration, social activities, work experiences, and skills of blindness for participants.

Board Input on SBVI Policy

No policies were implemented by the Division in FFY 2012.

The Board of SBVI Annual Report

SBVI staff teamed with the Board of SBVI to complete and submit the Board's annual report on the status of SBVI programs. The board has been instrumental in designing an annual report that is accessible and that provides valuable information to readers concerning SBVI programs. The Board also made recommendations on content, layout, and a redesign of the consumer satisfaction survey portion of the report.

The Board annual report was completed and submitted within timelines mandated by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The Division

incorporated all of the Board's recommendations into the final report and redesigned the consumer satisfaction survey report to provide easily understood results.